

Amendment to Claims

Claims 1 - 16, 18, 24 - 35 (Cancelled)

19. (Original) A method for use in a switch in a storage network, comprising:

receiving a packet at an ingress port of an ingress linecard, said packet destined for a virtual target with a virtual target address, the packet associated with a request;

adding a local header to the packet;

retrieving a virtual target descriptor identifier, wherein the virtual target descriptor identifier identifies a virtual target descriptor, wherein the virtual target descriptor stores information about the virtual target;

allocating an ingress task control block identified by an ingress task control block index, wherein the ingress task control block index stores information about the request;

placing the ingress task control block index and the virtual target descriptor identifier into the local header;

retrieving a flowID from the virtual target descriptor and placing the flowID into the local header, wherein the flowID identifies an egress linecard;

forwarding the packet to the egress linecard through a fabric;

receiving the packet at the egress linecard;

using the virtual target descriptor identifier, retrieving a physical target descriptor identifier, wherein the physical target descriptor identifier identifies a

physical target descriptor, wherein the physical target descriptor stores information about a physical target that is associated with the virtual target;

allocating an egress task control block with an egress task control block index, wherein the egress task control block index stores information about the request;

using information in the physical target descriptor to convert the virtual target address to a physical target address;

removing the local header and forwarding the packet to an egress port on the egress linecard; and

sending the packet from the egress port to a physical target device, using the egress task control block index as a source identifier.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein all of the steps occur at wire speed.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein all of the steps occur without buffering the packet.

22. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the virtual target descriptor, the virtual target descriptor identifier, the ingress task control block the egress task control block, the physical target descriptor, and the physical target descriptor identifier are each stored in memory on the respective linecards.

23. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the virtual target descriptor and the ingress task control block are stored in an SRAM on the ingress linecard, the virtual target descriptor identifier is stored in a CAM on the ingress linecard, the physical target descriptor and the egress task control block are stored in an SRAM on the egress linecard, and the physical target descriptor identifier is stored in a CAM on the egress linecard.